

Advisory Teaching Service

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A splint in my shoe!!

Information and advice for schools and settings



Advisory Teaching Service

PD Team



What is it?

- A device worn in a shoe
- It is moulded to exactly fit an individual. It **cannot** be used by anyone else
- There are many variations and types.
- It is often referred to as an AFO.

This stands for ankle foot orthosis

When is it used?

- According to physiotherapy advice
- Most children in mainstream schools will wear their AFOs all day
- Every child's needs are different. It is important to talk to the child, family and physiotherapist to establish the times when the AFO should be worn

Things to think about when planning school activities

Core Subjects

There may be implications for class focused activities in Literacy and Numeracy lessons. Sitting on a mat for long periods of time whilst wearing an AFO may cause discomfort. Consider the pupil (or group of pupils) using a chair or cushion.

Physical Education and Swimming

It may take a child with AFO's longer to get changed. A child's balance without a splint, (e.g. after changing for swimming) may be poor. Footwear requirements for PE will vary with each child. Discuss this with your physiotherapist.

Days out and Residential

It will be necessary to consider the splint, and find out when it will be needed.

Additional Information

"Hands up for Andie" (ISBN 0 9534207 0 1) is a good story about a child who wears AFO's. This story is suitable for Primary pupils.



Contact

Physiotherapist Name: _____

Contact Number: _____

Things to Remember

- There may be times when a splint may be more difficult to put on comfortably.
- **Take your time.**
- If the foot will not slide in easily, ease the toes down, then up and try again.
- Knee socks are more comfortable than ankle socks. These can be turned over the top of the AFO to prevent “sock slippage”. This prevents chafing and improves comfort.
- If the Velcro is not sticking ask a parent to clean it out. A metal suede brush is a useful tool for this job!
- After a splint has been put on, or taken off, a child may need time to adjust.
- As AFOs are made of plastic, they are likely to cause sweating. The child is at risk of athlete’s foot. Good hygiene will help.
- Children may prefer to wear trousers if they feel self-conscious. Trousers styles are easier to manage if they are wide at the bottom, or elasticated.



Why is it used?



- To support the foot and ankle
- To improve walking
- To assist balance and posture.
- To improve control of a joint.
- To improve the position of the foot and toes.

Using a splint at School

Use the splint according to:

Physiotherapy advice

👍 Make sure you know what this advice is, by:

Checking with parents or carers.

👍 **If you have concerns about the AFOs:**

👍 Contact parents or carers initially.

Contact the physiotherapist if you need to.

Where does an AFO come from?

The prescription will have been written by the child's specialist or physiotherapist.

An AFO is made by an orthotist.

An orthotist is a professional who assesses and recommends forms of splinting or footwear.

They are usually based in hospitals.



Putting splints on and off

Whilst mainstream pupils should be encouraged to manage their own AFOs, it is important to be able to help them if required.

It is absolutely vital that a splint is put on correctly.

Step One

Start with the child sitting or lying with their knee bent. Check which splint is left and right— if this is not clear, ask a carer to mark them.

Step Two

Make sure that socks are smooth and well fitted.

Step Three

Place the heel into the back of the splint.

Step Four

Fasten all straps, starting with the ankle strap.

Check that the AFOs are comfortable before you put the shoe on.

Step Five

Open shoes completely before placing child's foot in.

Step Six

Fasten shoes carefully. Ask the child if they are comfortable.

Useful Tips

- Trainers fit well with AFOs. School uniform policies may need to be considered.
- If a child wears a splint they will be regularly monitored by a physiotherapist.
- Parents will be used to coping with splints. Working with them will be very helpful.
- It is a parent or carer's responsibility to arrange appointments to see the orthotist.
- Involve the child in all decision making about their personal needs. This will lead to them taking full responsibility for themselves.
- It may be useful to have a private chat with the child to find out how they feel about the AFOs.
- If a splint is missing or not being worn as usual, contact the family initially.
- If socks have prominent seams or textured patterns they may cause pressure or discomfort. Turning socks inside out helps to reduce this.